Father, enlighten our blind eyes! Help us to see anew thy truth! Turn us from all half-truths and errors, to walk in the light of Christ all our days! Bless the Churches of Christ, and all their leaders, that they may with deep sincerity and conviction genuinely lead our world into thy truth. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

—1512 *Westlawn Avenue, Fayetteville, N. C.* 28305

UNITY MEETING IN DALLAS

Wynnewood Chapel, 2303 S. Tyler, will conduct, as it does every other year, a unity forum. The date this year is September 7-9, Thursday night through Saturday noon. The participants will represent most of the groups within Churches of Christ and Christian Churches. Emphasis this year will be upon *sharing* our experiences in study and life in the Son. While the roster is not yet complete, we definitely know that Carl Ketcherside and David Reagan will be on the program, which make two good reasons for you to plan to be with us. Write to Ray Specht, 1226 Sunnyside, about accommodations in Dallas and other information.

Resources of Power, the bound volume of this journal for 1966, is now available for only 3.00. It is hardcover, done in red with gold lettering, and attractive dust jacket with art work. It has a preface, table of contents and an index, along with 200 pages of reading. You will appreciate it as a permanent addition to your library. The supply is limited, so you should order soon. If you plan to get the matching volume for 1967, to be entitled *Things That Matter Most,* you should reserve a copy, but send no money.

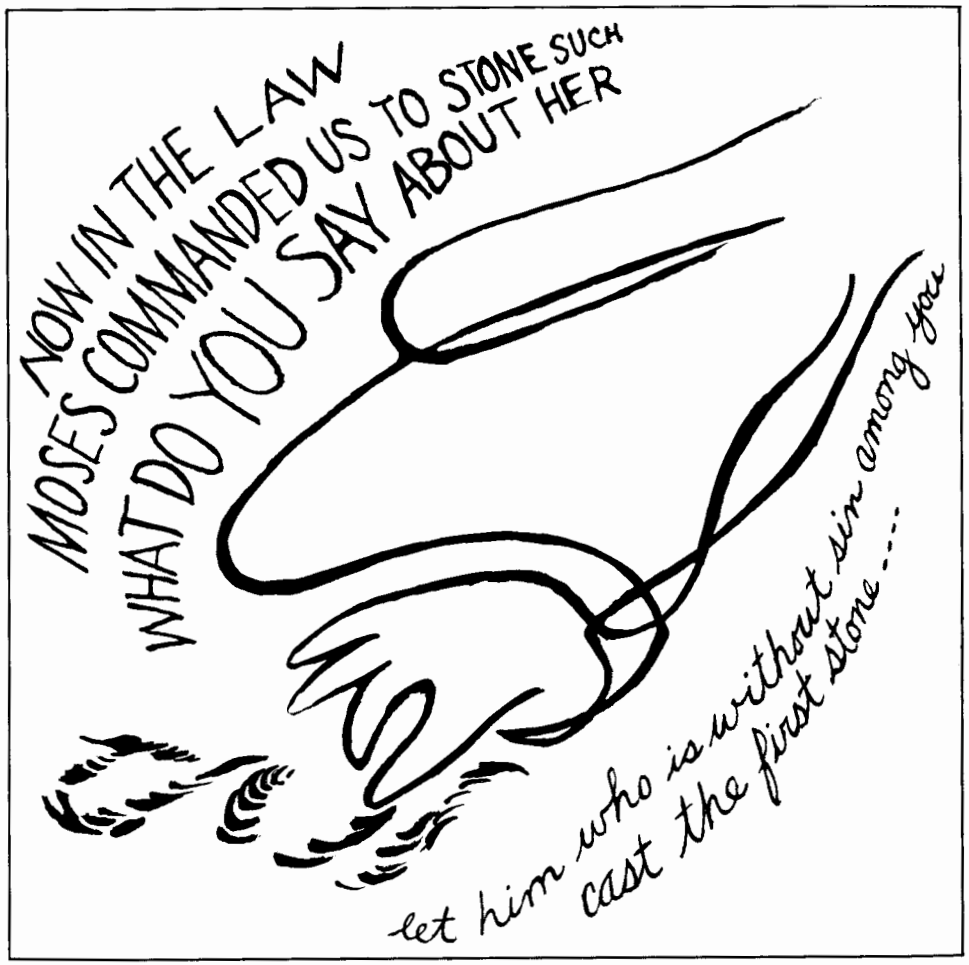
Remember that we do not publish *Restoration Review* in July and August. The next issue in September will give a report on the unity meeting at Milligan College, which you will not want to miss, entitled "The Spirit of Milligan."

For many months now circumstances have been such that we have put this paper in the mail almost a month late. We hope to correct this by September. We intend to publish on the 15th of each month—the issue for *that* month! We are promising to do better, despite all the difficulties.

You can subscribe to this journal for one year for only a dollar; in clubs of 6 or more at 50 cents each. Back copies available at 15 cents each.

RESTORATION REVIEW, 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas 76201.

RESTORATION REVIEW

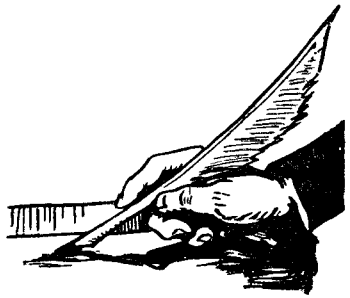

NOW IN THE LAW MOSES COMMANDED US TO STONE SUCH
WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT HER
let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone ...

See article on "The Sins That Matter Most", page 105.

Volume 9, No. 6 June, 1967

Editorial...

LEROY GARRETT, Editor



JESUS WILL HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

I used to be harder on folk that use tobacco than I am now. I would make those trifling references that were supposed to be humorous about how God would have given us smokestacks had He intended for us to smoke, and of how there is fire on one end of a cigarette and a fool on the other. The one that must have always embarrassed the smokers in my audience was my explanation that it is not, after all, the man that smokes. It is the cigarette that smokes; man is the sucker!

While I may now be no more tolerant of the deadly habit, I now see it as much as an illness as I do a habit. My censure has turned to pity. I see college girls take up the habit just for the heck of it, and then get hooked to the point that they can't quit. After awhile comes the typical cigarette cough. It is sad to realize what is happening to their healthful lungs and heart, and the risk they are taking with the children they will someday bear. Their own textbooks warn them, and I never fail to emphasize the facts that are now common knowledge.

It is a tragic sight to see an otherwise strong, stalwart, resolute man who is trapped by the cigarette habit. Few are left who will defend it as a harmless habit. Everybody knows, for the evidence is so overwhelming that the warning has to be printed on every pack. Still there is no noticeable decline in smoking. Why? Part of the answer is simply that people haven't the will to quit. It must be a hard blow to one's self image for him to admit this to himself. To be a slave to a weed—a little cigarette—is hard on the ego.

Surely most people would be pleased to kick the habit. When a man has to get up during the night to smoke . . . When the first thing he reaches for at the beginning of a new day is a cigarette . . . When he finds himself embarrassed and irritable in situations when he can't smoke . . . When he has to rationalize and justify himself in the face of a *Readers Digest* report on what science says may happen to him if he doesn't quit . . . When he has to be rude and foul up the air in

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homes and automobiles for children and non-smokers . . . When he has to pay hard-earned cash for such a habit . . . When he keeps on and on, even after promising himself he will quit, and even when his conscience urges it . . . When he smells of the habit . . . Surely something tragic has befallen a man who has to yield to such a senseless habit and say, "I can't quit". It seems that he is being denied of his manhood.

I assume that any man with intelligence and foresight would choose to be free of the cigarette trap. He continues only because he cannot find his way out. Such a man is as much in need of help as the dope addict or the alcoholic. The man is ill who is the victim of craving, when he is at the mercy of irrational forces within him.

I want to help him and I have the answer for him. He can be delivered if he really wants to be . . . with the help of Jesus.

Jesus came to save man . . . the *whole* man. If a man is physically ill, Jesus wants him well. If he is emotionally ill, Jesus wants him well. If he is hungry, Jesus wants him fed. If he is ensnared by carnal habits, Jesus wants him delivered. Salvation is a big word. It means renewal of self and transformation of character. It means a new creation in every respect that man is man. Joy displaces fear and hope displaces despair. Human dignity and self-respect are restored. Salvation means to become a new person, one in whom Christ lives through His Spirit.

Herein lies the answer for the cigarette addict, and it is an answer inspired by love. Jesus loves and He will help, if one will but ask for the help. He always gives to those who ask and opens to those who knock.

Let me suggest these points to all who wish to be delivered of the cigarette habit:

1. Make up your mind definitely that you must quit. Your desire to quit must become stronger than your desire to continue. Will is simply desire. Once your will to be free is stronger than your will to continue the battle is half-won.

2. Ask Jesus to help you to carry out your heart's desire to quit. Pray for the strength and fortitude that only He can give. Confess your inability to do it alone. Trust in His grace to save you from this enslavement. I am suspicious that few smokers who talk about wanting to quit have ever asked God for help.

3. Ask the Lord to fill you with His Spirit to the point that all craving for the cigarette will be taken away. Implore God to transform your desires, that you will indeed crave God Himself as you have craved cigarettes.

There is no question in my mind but what you will never again desire a cigarette if you will dare to take these three steps. I say *dare* because it takes courage to yield oneself to God and really believe in His deliverance.

What a blessed day that will be! You'll be free of the most senseless habit ever devised by man. You'll not have to smell yourself anymore. Better still, others will not have to smell you. That cough, that rasp throat. Free! Your food will even begin to have taste again.

The Lord is ready to help you. Are you ready to ask?

Write to me personally if you want the prayers of others in your behalf.

We will pray for you, and we will ask others who have been delivered from the habit to pray for you.

HOLY OF HOLIES

Most of our subscribers realize that *Restoration Review* is a humble effort, emanating from the home of the editor, with his wife serving as custodian of the mailing list. Since moving to Denton our operation has been crowded into what was intended to be the dining room of our new home. So up until now there has been nothing pretentious about our operation. But we can hardly lay claim to such simplicity any longer, for a great change has been wrought at 1201 Windsor Dr. in Denton, Texas.

This journal is now being sent forth from the Holy of Holies, which probably makes it the most distinctive publication in the world.

Our double garage has become a catch-all for bicycles, boxes, and stuff; especially bicycles, and an occasional automobile. So with the help of two beloved neighbors, Leonard Hurd and Marvin Sittin, we converted it into two lovely rooms, about 450 square feet in all. The first of the new rooms off from the kitchen is Ouida's room for sewing (she needs a large table upon which to spread her materials and *leave* them, thus escaping from the livingroom floor) and ironing. The table is really a tennis table, so the room doubles for a play room for the kids and for family tennis matches. It will also, when school starts again, be a study for the kids, around that large table (when the sewing isn't out), with each child having space all his own on a nearby bookcase.

From this room one moves on into what was first called "Daddy's study", which has insulated inside walls (and you all know *three* reasons why!), but which is as much the mailing room for *Restoration Review,* with its large, walk-in storage room.

A few weeks back when we were giving Sam Rogers, now of Southwestern Christian College, the grand tour, he said, once he had passed through "Mother's room" and into "Daddy's study" (names that are confusing because Mother already has a room upstairs shared by Daddy): "So this is the Holy of Holies, while that room is the Holy Place!" Sam was surely inspired when he said that, for the names have stuck, and *Restoration Review* now has the distinct honor of emanating from the Holy of Holies.

It does seem a bit irreverent sometime. When Philip has lost a sock, which is as often as he wears socks, someone is sure to bellow forth: "I saw a sock in the Holy Place . . . or maybe it was the Holy of Holies!" To be sure, the High Priest, going into the Holy of Holies far more often than once a year, has difficulty safeguarding it from intrusion. But it is indeed a fact that the glory of the Lord is in this place, despite an occasional stray sock, or baseball bat, or arithmetic book.

The most elegant compliment we get when our friends take the tour is that no one would ever guess that it was once a garage.

But that figures. Whoever heard of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies looking like a garage!

You'll treat *Restoration Review* with respect now, won't you?

Oh, yes, you wonder about the Shekinah. That is when Ouida is in here!

The Things That Matter Most . . . No. 6

THE SINS THAT MATTER MOST

There are frequent efforts made in the Bible to identify those sins that God hates most. In Psalms 15 the question is weighed as to who will dwell in God's holy hill, and it is made clear that slanderers, liars and reprobates will not. It specifies that those who do evil to a friend, reproach a neighbor, or take advantage of a loan will not sojourn in the Lord's tent.

The prophets often pinpointed those sins most abhorred by God. Zechariah says: "Do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, says the Lord." Amos spoke to several nations, accusing each of three or four of the most abominable sins, including such things as violating the law of brotherhood and treating humanity with disrespect. They would be punished, the prophet insisted, because they sold the righteous for silver and cast off all pity. Drinking had become so excessive that they were using bowls for wine, and a man and his son were sleeping with the same woman.

Jeremiah was disturbed because "Both prophet and priest are ungodly; even in my house I have found their wickedness, says the Lord." He goes on to say: "In the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness." (23:11, 14) These sins are especially *horrible* to the prophet since they are committed by the religious leaders, thus setting a bad example for the others.

More than anything else, however, the Lord's wrath was against cold and meaningless worship, which emanated from a selfish and proud heart. He even tells Jeremiah not to pray for such ones. Even when the people come to the temple to pray and offer sacrifices, the Lord turns His face from them. They make God's house "a den of robbers", and when they cry out "We are delivered!" it means nothing at all because of their abominable lives .(chap. 7) Their sin was in only having a form of godliness, for in their lives they denied its power. According to 2 Tim. 3:5 this is among the sins that matter most.

The prophet Isaiah would add *wilfull ignorance* to the list of the more serious sins. "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand." (1:3) It is the depths of arrogance to pretend a spiritual wisdom that one does not even desire, and it is this that the prophet detested. Among the woes that he pronounced was this one:

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" (Isa. 5:20-21)

The prophet Micah makes clear what God considers most wrong by naming what He considers most right:

"He Has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

In the same context the prophet refers to such sins as wicked scales, deceitful weights, violence, and a mean tongue.

In *Proverbs,* chapter 6, there is a list of the seven things which the Lord hates. It is a wise man's list of the sins that matter most.

1. Haughty eyes, which reflect a proud heart.
2. A lying tongue, which shows a lack of veracity.
3. Hands that shed innocent blood, which is a desecration of human personality, made in the image of God.
4. A heart that devises wicked plans, which reveals a mind so corrupt that it uses others only as a means for its own gratification.
5. A false witness who breathes out lies, which shows no regard for truth.
6. Feet that make haste to run to evil, which describes a life of folly and moral irresponsibility.
7. A man who sows discord among brothers, which shows an insensitivity to brotherhood and a willingness to corrupt it for one's own egoistic ends.

We are more familiar with the various lists in the New Covenant scriptures that name the more serious sins. The catalogue given in 2 Tim. 3, referred to above, stresses those wrongs that are centered in selfishness: "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant . . . " He also lists "swollen with conceit." Then there are those sins stemming from disrespect of others: "abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce." He is describing degeneracy of mind and heart when he names: "haters of good, treacherous, reckless . . . "

"Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" is also on the list, and this sin may be as prevalent in the modern church as it was in the world of Paul's day. The root of all sin is, after all, disregard for God. It is made all the worse when one regards pleasure and disregards God.

Paul gives further lists in Col. 3 and Gal. 5 and elsewhere. In Col. 3:5 he begins the catalogue of evil by saying: "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you," and then follows the naming of such sins of the heart as immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness. The list in *Galatians* is introduced by the injunction: "Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh," and most notable in this list is "dissension, party spirit, envy." By our standards we are reluctant to place these things in the same category with "immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery . . . " Those of us who are most factidious in avoiding "the sins of the flesh" are slow in seeing that partyism is in God's mind on the same list with adultery and drunkenness.

Introducing these catalogues of sins as he does with such terms as "what is earthly in you" and "the desires of the flesh," Paul is giving us insights into the meaning of sin. *Sin* comes from a word originally meaning "missing the mark," a military term describing a failure to hit the target. In biblical terms we can say that sin is man's failure to be like God. It is to veer from the course that God intends for man, whether knowingly or unknowlingly.

Paul sees the flesh as the seat of sin. But by *flesh* (Grk. *sarx*) he does not refer to the body (*soma*). By *flesh* he

means man's weakness, the propensity toward evil. It is that tendency to be unlike God and to rebel against God. Sin is therefore a state of separation from God. A sin is an act or attitude stemming from the state of sin, in which one behaves or thinks contrary to God's purpose for him. Hence it is a missing of the divine mark, of which all men are guilty.

And so Paul says, using the term *flesh* again: "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7-8).

Again he speaks of the *flesh* in 1 Cor. 2:14, though he uses the synonym *psuchikos* (unnatural or animalistic) when he says: "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." This is saying that the carnal part of man cannot understand or appreciate God, for it is at war with God. It is the *state* of sin that curses man by virtue of the fact that man is carnal as well as spiritual. This is what Paul refers to when he speaks of "what is earthly in you."

It could be argued, therefore, that it is amiss to speak of the sins that matter most, for all men have sinned and are in the state of sin (unless redeemed by Christ) and so sin is sin with no differentiation to be made. But this is to overlook the difference between the state of sin and sins committed therein, or sins done because of the continual presence of man's carnal nature, even if redeemed by Christ. Surely some acts and thoughts are more sinful than others, for they are more serious departures from the will of God.

The same may be true even of the *state* of sin. One man may be more deeply entrenched in a life of sin than another, more unlike the image of God than another. Otherwise the Bible would hardly use such language as "Evil men and imposters grow worse and worse," and "They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin."

We must guard against making false judgments about sin. We are inclined either to treat all sins alike, which is bad, or to magnify the lesser sins to the point that they become the greater sins, which is worse. Either fallacy makes our views superficial, but the second adds the pharisaical trait of becoming preoccupied with trivia.

A case in point, which took place in a Dallas congregation, takes the form of a drama, involving family, feelings and friends. The daughter was graduating from high school, where she had marched in the pep squad, dressed in shorts. She was chosen as leading lady in the senior play, which called for dancing scenes (in sparse dress again) and even one in which she lighted a cigarette and twirled with the boys in a night club, all accented by the fact that she did it so very well! This gala affair was followed by an all-night senior party—a Saturday night—chaperoned by the way by her own parents.

A pious girl she is, and one taught never to miss the assembly, so she wound up the exciting senior week in time to attend an early service at her congregation.

During his sermon the minister said some things about the girls in the

congregation who display themselves before the public in shorts, referring to those in the pep squad at the high school and perhaps to those in the play. It was probably only a passing remark among more important points, but still he communicated to the audience, and especially the teenagers, a common view of what the church sees as sin. The girl apparently took it in her stride and went her merry way, reacting as so many teenagers do in not taking too seriously the dull platitudes that they hear from the pulpit.

But her father did not react so calmly. Thinking the point important enough to repeat at another service, the preacher again talked about the girls in the congregation who were dancing in shorts on stage and field, or some such words. The father, realizing that everybody knew that the minister was referring to his daughter, stormed out of the assembly in righteous indignation—or at least in indignation!

Later he registered his protest to the elders, insisting that if there was a question about such things it should be handled privately, thus saving his daughter (and himself!) public embarrassment. When the elders defended the minister's action, the father asked one of them about his son's basketball activity, performed before the public eye *in shorts*. And on and on it went..

(If I am prejudiced in my portrayal of this, you should know that I am referring to one of my own brothers and a niece. I saw the play, by the way, and thought it delightful!)

This story points up our need for a consideration of the sins that matter most, which should be our chief concern in our public utterances. What sins would concern Jesus should he stand before that same congregation? He might smile with compassion and delight over the tired high school kids, after a harrowing once-in-a-lifetime experience, who did not forget His assembly even at such a time as that. And He might be less merciful toward sleepy business men who have dissipated their energies all week, as they do every week, chasing the dollar all for selfish gain. His rebukes might well be toward self-righteousness and complacency than toward kids at a high school dance. He might be far more concerned about the lack of love and devotion in the hearts of those that wear His name than in the length of a woman's skirt. Pride might draw His wrath much more than poker.

Preachers who bargain for pulpits might disgust Him more than a crap game in a back alley, and congregational pride more than prostitution. Elders who seek "peace" more than truth and brethren who have their minds closed to new ideas may be more offensive to the Christ than gambling or dancing. If amidst our arrogance, smug complacency, and insatiable luxury we have occasion to chide high school kids for wearing shorts, we testify to the awful truth that we have little concept as to the nature of sin. And while we are at it we alienate our young people, for they can hardly take our small talk about sin very seriously in view of the real sins they see in the church itself—superficiality not being the least of them.

Yes, all these things we call "worldly" (we hardly see self-conceit as worldly) may well be sinful, whether smoking, dancing, gambling or wearing shorts, but they may well *not* be. It depends. To say the least, these were not the sins that disturbed Jesus. They are not the sins that matter most.

The mistake we make in "preaching" about these things to our youth is that *we put them under law.* They get the impression that if they avoid all the things on the "don't" list they are not worldly. We must rather urge them to yield themselves to God's grace, and thus realize that the worldliness that is real is a carnal heart, which may manifest itself in erecting a pretentious church edifice as well as in a brothel.

Let us point our youth to Christ, to His love and goodness, to His mercy and compassion. If we bring them to the Christ, we need not bother about putting a tape measure to thesir skirts. His love will constrain them. If they then choose to join others on the athletic field or on a basketball court dressed in shorts (would anything else be appropriate?), or on a dance floor, we will conclude that they are doing what they believe Christ would have *them* do in *this* situation. It is what we do as members of Christ that really matters, not as members of a congregation. Our Christian faith is largely our own business, a very personal matter indeed. In Rom. 14:4 Paul asks: "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?" He then utters a most neglected truth: "It is before his own master that he stands or falls."

It would be wise of us if we approached our youth with that philosophy spoken by Augustine: "Love God and do what you please." This must be our message—*the love of God through Christ.* If this does not motivate our youth in the right direction, it will certainly be of no avail to preach law to them. If we teach them to love God, they will of course be pleased only to do what pleases God, not out of fear, but out of devotion.

The legalists were offended when Jesus taught that it is a *bad heart* that defiles man, not violations of man-made codes, whether regulations about washing hands, dress or diet. "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man," He said. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man." (Matt. 15:19-20)

In his *Mere Christianity* C. S. Lewis writes about the sins that matter most. He identifies pride as "the Great Sin" and as the basis of all sin. He observes that "the worst of all vices" has a way of smuggling itself into the very center of our religious lives, that the most pride-filled people are often religious leaders, who theoretically admit themselves to be nothing in God's presence, but really imagine that He approves of them and thinks them far better than ordinary people.

Lewis points out that pride is essentially competitive. The proud girl not only wants to be pretty, but prettier than others; an arrogant intellectual is not satisfied with being intelligent, but in being more intelligent than others. Pride gets no pleas-

ure out of having something. It must have *more* than the other fellow.

This truth about the most important of all sins strikes home in the lives of most of us. Perhaps we are most unlike God when we are conceited, and when we are so proud that we think of other children of God as competitors. We compare our homes and our salaries with those of other Christians. We want our children to go to a *better* college than others get to attend. Preachers have a way of not being satisfied merely in being effective speakers. The compliment they like is that they are *better* than the others. They also are drawn toward the biggest and most influencial churches with the best salaries. In moments of candor the ministers will admit to the competitive nature of their profession.

But we are all hurt by this monstrous sin of pride. We are too concerned for self. We have even learned to be proud of our humility. And yet it is the one sin, as Lewis observes, that people are so unaware of being guilty. While they detest pride and conceit in others, they are blind to it in their own lives—except those whose hearts have been touched by Christ. Through His indwelling Spirit we cultivate selflessness. Not that we deprecate ourselves or indulge in false modesty, but simply that in Him we forget self in service to others.

I am persuaded that more of this kind of thinking will lead us to a deeper view of sin, and will consequently turn our eyes from the lesser sins of others to the sins that matter most—the ones that we are more likely to find in our own lives and in our own churches.—*the Editor*

Review of Voices of Concern . . . No. 6

CLOSED MINDS AND COLD HEARTS

JAMES D. BALES

Although some of the *Voices* seemed to find little or nothing good in the churches of Christ, David R. Darnell stated that there he had learned a good deal, and that he thanked "God for this rich heritage which is mine because of the Churches of Christ." (p. 216). However, he took his pilgrimage from us for several reasons; two of which he presented in his essay. First, our minds are closed. Second, our hearts are cold and suspicious. (pp. 216-217, 222)

Closed Minds

Churches of Christ have *"a 'closed' attitude towards religious learning."* In his home he had been taught not to fear truth, to be open to truth, to study, and to be willing to have one's positions subjected to criticism. In classes in two of the colleges maintained by brethren he said that "I soon came to realize that the Churches of Christ did not hold such an attitude towards religious learning at all." (pp. 216-217) We present "one viewpoint and one only" (p. 218). He implied we "burn books" (p. 217). There may be books which one should voluntarily burn (Acts 19:17-20).

What shall we say to these charges? (a) There are undoubtedly closed minds among us. This does not bind me and make me have a closed mind. (b) I do not have to be anything other than a member of Christ's church in order to have an open mind in a good sense. (c) There are open minds which are open at both ends and have a draft blowing through the middle. The open mind we should have is the honest, studious, mind which wants the good and which is honest enough to accept truth even when it costs. (d) A part of the purpose of education is, in another sense, to close the mind. We do not want babes to grow up with an open mind as to where they will carry out certain natural functions. We do not want an accountant who has an open mind toward the multiplication tables; or a bank teller who has an open mind as to whom the money belongs; or a doctor, who treats our wife, to have an open mind on adultery; or a teacher who has an open mind on whether or not it makes any difference what God has said; or a preacher who is unconcerned about truth; etc. We need to have the attitude of being open to truth and closed to error; and in this situation we shall, of course, examine many things which will turn out to be error rather than truth. (e) Christians certainly are not the only ones who stand in danger of having a closed mind.

In *Why Scientists Accept Evolution,* Dr. Robert T. Clark and I established from their own writings that Darwin and others had closed their minds to the very possibility of divine creation. Although I have read hundreds of books by unbelievers, which were designed in one way or another to undermine faith in the Bible, I have met very few unbelievers who have even read one book on why believe the Bible. There are countless modernists who have closed their minds as to the possibility of the Scriptures being inspired. Their closed mind would not justify me in having a closed mind, but the problem of the closed mind is far wider than members of the church. (f) We should have the determination not to go beyond that which is written (1 Cor. 4:6). We should continually study the word of God that we may know of Paul's "ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church." (1 Cor. 4:17). (g) As for the presentation of both sides, we should try to be fair in our presentation and examination of the position of another. However, it is obvious that we do not have the time, nor is it necessary, to spend as much time presenting an atheist's position, or that of a Buddhist, as they would spend presenting it. Yet, we should examine not merely their weak arguments but also their strong ones.

(h) If not at the time that he was there, somewhere about that time, the reviewer spoke at one of the Colleges, where Darnell complained he heard only one viewpoint, and presented a viewpoint which was opposed to that of the administration. Furthermore, in today's world we do not have to worry about whether various and conflicting viewpoints will be present. They assault our mind from every conceivable means of communication. We are called on to be busy so as to be sure that the will of God is heard amidst this medley of voices. Furthermore, no one has the authority to stop an individual from

reading, listening, and living by his conviction. Of course, one does not have the right to bind another to back him in preaching those things in which the other person does not believe. (i) Darnell is right in saying that some have dismissed the positions of others too lightly, and have failed to grapple with the problems with which those people were grappling. We cannot fairly evaluate the position of another unless we understand it. In my class in world religions, for example, I have tried to bring out that to understand is not the same as to approve, but that we must seek to understand others not only in order to know how best to approach them, but also to accept any truth which they have.

(j) Historically, and in our day, as a people we have usually been willing to let our positions be subjected to public scrutiny. Thus debates have been conducted from time to time amongst ourselves and with others. Of course, one can be dishonest in a debate just as he can in a conversation, a book, a sermon, or in anything else.

The Cold Heart

"The second attitude which separated me from those with whom I had so long worked was this: *a lack of love and a suspicious fear of other Christians.*" (p. 222) " . . . what is really wrong among the Churches of Christ is a sickness of heart, a fear of others who differ with them on doctrinal issues, and a lack of love for such persons. It is a kind of spiritual paranoia that looks with suspicious distrust on those who are different, that demands credentials before it will give its love, and that destroys all possibility for real growth in Christian thought." (pp. 223-224).

It is true that there are some who have cold hearts and suspicious minds; and none of us have matured in love. However, I do not have to leave the New Testament church or adopt other errors, in order to grow in love, and to keep from being suspiciously afraid of others. However, one can be broad in his love and narrow in his convictions. We face the problem of opposing sin and error, and yet loving the sinner. We should will good toward people not because they are good, or because we agree with them, or because they have a multitude of loveable qualities. We should love because we are people of good will; who have first been loved by God and who, loving God, grow in love for the world for God loved the world and gave His Son for the world.

Love does not imply, however, that there are no grounds for disfellowship; and it does not imply that we must broaden out and extend fellowship beyond what is authorized by the Bible. Darnell mentioned one preacher who said, concerning a position which Darnell had taken, "if that is true, how can we condemn the Catholics?" (p. 224). Darnell says: "Indeed, how can we condemn the Catholics? Is that an essential to our faith, that we condemn others? Why should we not look for grounds for fellowship, understanding, and agreement instead? Why not build bridges instead of walls?" (p. 224).

What shall we say to these things? (a) It seems to me the preacher meant that Darnell's position would make it impossible to oppose the errors of Romanism; and not that we can condemn people. We cannot justify or condemn, but we must try to find out what the Lord approves and what He

disapproves. (b) Darnell certainly did some condemning in this chapter. He accused us of having the closed mind, and of being without love. He wrote: "Churches of Christ do not teach or practice genuine love for their religious neighbors." (p. 224)

This is about as severe and condemning an indictment as could be made. And it is a blanket indictment. He has learned to love, but the churches of Christ have not! My assumption is that he has been careless in his manner of expression, and that he does not really believe that there is no love amongst churches of Christ for their religious neighbors. Surely Darnell, who is so hard on us, should be able to understand why some members of the church are so hard on others who differ with them. Furthermore, as far as I know, he is still a member of the church although he has gone into some errors in which I cannot fellowship him. (c) It is essential to our faith that we contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude3). How can we accept in fellowship the Pope who claims to be the earthly head of Christ's church, when Christ's church has only one head—Christ. I agree that we should not run and hide from others, but enter into genuine dialogue or discussion with them. Although we should start with our points of agreement, and should be fair and show good will, why should we build a bridge which will enable us to accept the Pope as within the fold of the Biblical faith? Any bridge built to the Pope should be for the purpose of providing a bridge for him to leave his office and be just a New Testament Christian.

Furthermore, the Bible has built some walls and we must study to find where they are built, but we must never try to figure out ways to breach these walls and build a bridge to walk away from the safety of the Father's house. Establish contacts with people, and be honest in our discussions with them, but do not try to scale any walls which the Lord has built or cross any bridges to any positions which the Lord does not sanction. There is a vast difference between approaching people in good will, as well as intelligently, and embracing them in fellowship as a member of the Lord's church.

Acts 21

Darnell cited Acts 21:17-26 to "show clearly how first century Christians felt free to continue observing the religious customs of the Law of Moses." (p. 224). In the light of the context in which he uses it, he implies that it sanctions Roman Catholic ritualism and doctrines. This is a difficult passage, and we hope to treat it in some detail, the Lord willing, in a book on *Puzzling Passages.* How could Paul thus participate in a sacrifice in the temple in order to prove that he kept the law (Acts 21:24,26). *Hebrews* tells us that Jewish Christians must abandon Judaism, and that those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat at our altar (Heb:10-15). The explanation which, so far as the author knows, does not violate any Scriptures, and which takes into consideration the general context, is that this was a period of transition wherein God permitted Jews to continue in the observance of the Law until He finally made it impossible through the revelation of "all truth" and the destruction of the temple.

Christ promised the apostles that

they would be guided into all truth (John 16:12-13). All truth, however, was not revealed at one moment and thus they were not required to live by the full revelation until the full revelation was made. Revelation was bit by bit, and not all at once. (1 Cor. 13: 8-11). It was not God's will to reveal everything to the church on Pentecost. God did not make crystal clear to the church on Pentecost that the Gentile was to come into Christ without having to have anything to do with the law. And thus for a period of time the church did not think that it was right to go into men uncircumcized, eat with them, and bring them in to Christ without having to have anything to do with the law. But finally God made this crystal clear in the revelation given at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10; 11; 15). After this, it was no longer permissible for the church to have the attitude which it had had toward the Gentile before Acts 10.

As J. W. McGarvey wrote: "But in Paul's earlier epistles, though some things had been written which, carried to their logical consequences, involved all of this (cf. Eph. 2:13-15; Heb. 7:8; 9:10. McGarvey may mean to compare *Eph.* with *Heb.,* and not to say that *Hebrews* was an earlier epistle of Paul, J.D.B.), these points had not yet been clearly revealed to his mind, and much less to the minds of the other disciples; for it pleased God to make Paul the chief instrument for the revelation of this part of his will. His mind, and those of all the brethren, were as yet in much the same condition on this question that those of the early disciples had been in before the conversion of Cornelius in reference to the salvation of the Gentiles. If Peter, by the revelation made to him in connection with Cornelius, was made to understand better his own words uttered on Pentecost (2:39, and we may add: The Lord's statement in the great commission concerning all nations wherein gospel-terms, not law-terms, were bound, J.D.B.), it should cause no surprise that Paul in his early writings uttered sentiments the full import of which he did not apprehend until later revelations made them plain. That it was so is but another illustration of the fact that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth, not at one bound, but step by step. In the wisdom of God the *Epistle to the Hebrews,* the special value of which lies in its clear revelations on the distinction between the sacrifices and priesthood under Moses and those under Christ, was written but a few years previous to the destruction of the Jewish temple, and the compulsory abrogation of all the sacrifices of the law; and thus any Jewish Christian, whose natural reverence for ancestral and divinely appointed customs may have prevented him from seeing the truth on this subject, might have his eyes opened in spite of himself." (*New Commentary on Acts,* Vol. II, pp. 208-209)

Does Paul's example furnish us with authority to participate in acts of worship which God has not authorized today? First, these Jews came from a *different background* than that of any religious people today. The law had been a divine institution for centuries. God had revealed it and required it. This is vastly different from people continuing in, regardless of how much long-suffering we may manifest in

trying to help them get away from some of their background, or *entering into* things which never were of divine origin; and thus which had never been required of them or their fathers by God.

Second, we find no case where the apostle Paul, or any other inspired man, participated in a pagan worship service. Paganism was never of divine origin. Paul not only said we should not worship in a pagan temple because it may cause a brother to stumble (1 Cor. 8:9-12), but he also clearly stated that it was wrong within itself. "What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. 10:19-22). And because some professed Christians have introduced various aspects of paganism into their worship and doctrine, does not make it right for us to participate in it. We do not even have the right to commune (1 Cor. 10:18), with Israel's altar (Heb. 13:10; Acts 21: 25). Does Darnell think that Paul could have participated in a pagan religious ceremony *in order to prove* that he, Paul, kept that pagan religion? But in Acts 21:24 *he proved he then kept the law.*

Third, Acts 21 deals with a *different people from any people today* on whom some try to bind, or justify in accepting, the religious ritualism of the law or of the traditions of men. That generation of Jews, mentioned in Acts 21, had been brought up under the law as a divine institution *while the law was still in force.* This cannot be said of any generation of the Jews since the first century. Furthermore, no Jew for centuries has been able to keep the old law, for the temple itself was destroyed. No Jew has authority from God to re-build it, and to re-institute its ritual.

Fourth, we are in a *different time* today. They lived in a time of transition from the law to the gospel, and God dealt with them in long-suffering. In fact, He gave Israel herself around 40 years in which to hear the gospel and repent before she was destroyed as a nation and scattered; and before He made it impossible for anyone to keep the law by destroying the temple in His overruling providence. We are not in such a transition period. We live in the time of the complete revelation. And this complete revelation makes it clear that neither Jew nor Gentile should keep the sacrificial system of the old law. How can we offer an animal sacrifice when it is crystal clear that Christ is our only sacrifice for sin, and that there can be no more offering for sin?

Fifth, any attempt to bind on Gentiles the ritual of the law was forbidden even in this transition period; and it is certainly forbidden today. James expressly said: "But as touching the Gentiles that have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication." (Acts 21:25). No one

was permitted to put on them the yoke of the law (Acts 15:10). To have done so would have been to subvert their souls (Acts 15:24). It would have implied that the law is a part of the gospel.

In the light of these considerations we ask: How can one use Acts 21 to justify the traditions of men in the elaborate ritualism of Roman Catholicism today?

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DOCTOR BALES AND THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

DAVID R. DARNELL

Out of a long experience of life and scholarship among Churches of Christ, Dr. James D. Bales has arrived at the conviction that the educational policies, the attitudes toward learning, and the relationship with religious neighbors among Churches of Christ are basically wholesome and what the truth of the Christian faith demands. Dr. Bales sees openness toward all truth, rejection of all error, firm hold to the "faith once delivered", but still love for and open dialogue with those who differ, as the manifest characteristics of at least the majority of responsible leaders of the Churches of Christ.

Though I am unable to share Dr. Bales' conviction, I sincerely hope that he is correct, and that I am wrong—and that my experience as a minister and student among Churches of Christ was only an unfortunate exception to the rule. For the sake of beloved relatives and friends, and the thousands of young people whose lives are being moulded under the influence of Churches of Christ; but especially for the sake of a world torn apart by deep religious prejudices and narrow sectarian claims, how I hope that Dr. Bales' conviction is well-founded, and that the overwhelming majority of leaders among Churches of Christ will manifest just such an attitude. For then, and only then, I believe, will the Churches of Christ be able to fulfill the ministry of which they are capable, and which our world so desperately needs.

Breathing throughout Dr. Bales' response to my essay is his deep concern for truth, and an unwillingness to countenance what he believes to be error and wrong. And while there are some statements of his to which I must take exception, still in this basic and all-pervasive quest for truth I find myself in hearty agreement. Let me mention three of the characteristics of the quest for truth which Dr. Bales has well pointed up:

(1) Dr. Bales calls for an open mind in a good sense—an honest, studious mind which wants the good, and which is honest enough to accept truth wherever it may be found, even when it costs. How desperately our world cries out for leadership possessed with just such an attitude!

The biblical message begins by telling us that this is God's world, and that it is *good*—every bit of it. God has made man in his image, and set him in the world to be God's representative, to subdue and conquer the created world in God's name. There is no truth but God's truth; there is no area of knowledge where man cannot walk, with God's help, unafraid. The Bible cries out to its hearers to seek

for truth as blind men long for light! As the miser's hand stretches out greedily for gold, so the biblical message urges us to let our hearts and minds grasp for God's truth. Jesus Christ will be the leader of no sectarian party. He calls for no man to bury his head in the sand, or shake in servile fear before any truth. He is the Lord of truth, who leads his followers out into the clear light of day, into the open espousal of truth for truth's sake, in every field of human endeavor—but nowhere more emphatically than in the study and understanding of the Bible.

In a world where respect for truth has crumbled away, and where truth has been made the tool of the party, or the slave of traditional orthodoxy, there can be no more pressing need than for the Church to raise up in every generation young men and women whose lives and hearts owe allegiance to nothing less than truth. In the service of truth we can stand and die with Jesus Christ, and we can issue a call to our entire world to stand with us on a common ground of respect for truth.

(2) Dr. Bales also calls for a "closed mind", but once again he means this in a good sense, not in the bad sense which I castigated in my essay. By the "closed mind" Dr. Bales means the willingness to bravely reject all that is false and wrong; the determination to call half-truths what they are, and the courage to oppose error and wrong with the fervency of conviction.

Here again, I agree whole-heartedly with Dr. Bales—and I would not want my essay to be understood in any other sense. No man, I think, can seriously attempt to follow Jesus Christ as Lord, or, for that matter, attempt to seriously seek for truth, without just such a "closed mind". Neither God, nor humanity, nor the unity of Christ's Church will be well served by pretending that error is truth, or that black is somehow white!

This is a lesson which resounds decisively throughout the pages of the Bible. Dr. Bales does well, I think, to point to Jesus' strong and trenchant denunciations of the Pharisees for their hypocritical religion. In such denunciations, Jesus only united his voice with that of the classical prophets of Israel before him.

This is also a lesson we are learning again today in the ecumenical encounters between the protestant denominations, and in the conversations with Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. True and lasting unity of God's people will not come by skirting issues, or minimizing the stringent demands of truth. I know of no ecumenical leader who denies this fact. The ecumenical meetings in which I have participated, and the ecumenical leaders with whom I have spoken, would all, I believe, agree in this fact: that the unity of God's Church will only come when God gives it, and it must only be based upon truth. Compromise and half-truth are no possible standing-ground for the followers of Jesus Christ.

And let me add that as a minister among the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) I can make this statement with all the courage and determination of heart that I possess. It is not an understanding that is peculiar to one group of Christians. Neither is it a possibility for only one group of

Christians. All of us have our traditions, and our prejudices, that hold us back and make our avowals of loyalty to truth seem shabby.

(3) Dr. Bales also calls for a willingness to fairly present and examine the positions which those who differ from us hold, looking not only for weaknesses but also for strengths in their positions. Dr. Bales agrees that:

> . . . some have dismissed the positions of others too lightly, and have failed to grapple with the problems with which these people were grappling. We cannot fairly evaluate the position of another unless we understand it . . . We must seek to understand others not only in order to know best how to approach them, but also to accept any truth which they have.

Now this statement may seem quite simple and obvious, so much so that we pass over it lightly and miss its dynamic force. How quickly and effectively such an approach as this would break down many of the barriers that stand in the way of Christian unity and world peace today! Think what such an attitude could mean in the Israeli-Abrab controversy that rages as I write these words! Or at the council tables between East and West! I am convinced that it is not so much "false doctrine" and hard-hearted error that separate the religious world today as it is lack of communication, and the failure to understand what one another is saying. How easy it is to disagree with and condemn another for his beliefs and ways of life—until we stand in his shoes, to look on things from his perspective, and begin to share in the background out of which his convictions have arisen!

But now let me add to this some three additional considerations concerning the quest for truth:

(1) First, a question: What are we to do when our young people, after the most diligent effort of which they are capable, following just such an attitude toward truth as that outlined above, arrive at conclusions which are in some respects contrary to those conclusions at which we ourselves have arrived?

Are we to subtly cast doubt on their motivations, or suggest that they are "going off"? That somehow we, or the "Restoration Fathers" were the only generation capable of arriving at new discoveries and new formulations of the Christian truth? Shall we imply that we, or those before us, had the right to launch out into new paths of "Restoration", but that succeeding generations no longer have this right?

And if we do, will we not thereby be reacting to our young thinkers just as an older generation reacted to an Alexander Campbell, or a "Raccoon" John Smith? Will we succeed in encouraging honest search for truth by drawing up dogmatic lines of orthodoxy, and cutting off from our active fellowship and support those who dare to cross those lines?

Is the promise of God's guidance limited to the first century, or is it a living and abiding reality that we can still claim today?

To ask such questions is, for me, to answer them. The only possible course for us to take is to respect our young people's honesty, and continue to love and actively support them, even though they question and sometimes deny what we hold to be true. It is my conviction that instead of discouraging and undermining such pursuits, we will be wise to fully underwrite and encourage our young leaders in such a quest for truth, praying for them and believing that the great shepherd of the sheep will still guide his flock and even in our day lead us into fresher and greater visions of his abiding truth. What a terrible tragedy if our most brilliant young minds must be silenced, and withdrawn from, and turned away from potential leadership in our congregations and schools, simply because they enter wholeheartedly into such a quest for truth!

(2) Now another question: When we say with Dr. Bales that we must be willing to fairly present and examine the positions of those with whom we differ, how shall we best do this?

I went to an Abilene Christian College lectureship to hear an "open forum" on instrumental music. The pro and con speakers were J. W. Roberts and Frank Pack! Is that an example of how to hear and understand the view that Christian worship has not been limited to acappella singing? I spoke with a young missionary to Africa who was constantly facing Communists in his work. I asked him what basic writings of Communism he had studied, and he replied *none*—he was using only Dr. Bales' book in opposition to Communism, and didn't have the time to do any further reading! What would we think of a Communist who sought to convert Christians to Communism without having read the Bible? Or, who had only read the Bible from the standpoint of atheism, and had never sought to listen to its wondrous truths with a sympathetic, understanding ear?

What I am saying is this: the position which others hold, and are willing to die for, can *never* be properly presented or honestly evaluated unless the best representatives of that position are given the full opportunity to state and defend their view. When we are afraid of such an exchange, we join with the sectarians of all party-loyalties throughout the centuries—and we betray our fear of God's willingness or ability to lead us into the truth of Christ. If a position is worth attacking and denying, it is worth the time and effort to understand thoroughly from the viewpoint of those who hold it!

(3) Even more basically, the quest for truth demands that we be willing to uncover and critically examine the presuppositions that underlie our own position. This is extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, in a thoroughgoing sense, to do. But, given the divided and competing nature of the world of thought today, and the fact that honesty and scholarship will allow us to do nothing less, there is no other avenue for us to take than to seriously and relentlessly make this attempt at radical self-criticism and self-understanding.

Such an attempt demands that we be willing to change, and be willing to endure the suffering and agony associated with change. But the heart that cries out for truth will allow us nothing less; nor will Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is my conviction that out of such a process, a new grasp and appreciation for the biblical message will emerge that can bring the healing and new life of Christ to our troubled world.

> Lord God, thou hast been the enlightener of men's minds throughout the centuries of man's long quest for truth. It is thy truth that we have sought, and begun to grasp, and which has marvelously blessed and enriched our lives. In Jesus Christ thou hast shown us thy truth in all its depth and beauty and grandeur that surpasses knowledge and understanding.